

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 7, 2004

Contact: Frank Mateljan

(213) 978-8340

Eight Wilmington Businesses Charged With Environmental Violations

*City Attorney Rocky Delgadillo's Environmental Justice Unit Coordinates
Multi-Agency Task Force to Ensure Compliance with the Law*

LOS ANGELES – Eight businesses, ranging from an auto repair shop to a major sandblasting company, were each charged with multiple criminal counts for creating environmental hazards in Wilmington following a series of ongoing multi-agency inspections, City Attorney Rocky Delgadillo announced.

“Since we began our Wilmington Initiative nearly a year ago, industrial and commercial polluters have been put on notice that protecting our environment and natural resources remains a top priority and those who place our natural resources at risk will be prosecuted,” said Delgadillo. “We will continue to be vigilant and decisive in our ongoing fight to bring long overdue environmental justice to the residents who live near Wilmington.”

“The community of Wilmington has historically been neglected and under served. I want to thank the City Attorney for committing to cleaning up Wilmington and for following through,” said Councilwoman Janice Hahn, who represents Wilmington. “Together, we are improving this community and sending a clear message that we will no longer tolerate people using Wilmington as a dumping ground. I hope to work closely with the City Attorney to bring these polluters to justice.”

The eight criminal cases filed by Delgadillo's Environmental Justice Enforcement and Compliance Team (EJECT) are part of the Wilmington Initiative which was launched on June 5, 2003. Since then, the initiative has resulted in 22 criminal filings for environmental violations.

The most significant of the eight cases was a 14-count criminal complaint against AJC Sandblasting Inc., following inspections in August 2003 by the Los Angeles County Fire Department Hazmat Division and the California Regional Water Quality Control Board.

AJC Sandblasting was charged with recklessly storing hazardous waste and flammable solvents which could result in fire, explosion, serious injury or death; a charge carrying a penalty up to \$250,000 for each day of violation and one year in jail according to Deputy City Attorney Vaughn Minassian.

-more-

-more-

- Penalties: Up to six months in jail and/or \$1,000 fine for each count.

Domingo Vazquez, dba California Auto Dismantler, 931 Vreeland Avenue, was inspected July 22, 2003, by Los Angeles County Fire Department Hazmat Division and the Los Angeles Department of Building & Safety. Arraignment is scheduled for June 11.

- Count 1 - Failure to implement a contingency plan.
- **Count 2 - Failure to obtain permit.**
- Count 3 - Unlawful construction of office trailer.
- Count 4 - Use of land other than was permitted.

- Penalties: Up to six months in jail and/or \$1,000 fine for each count.

Javier Lopez, dba Shorty Body Shop, 932 Henry Ford Avenue, was inspected on June 26, 2003, by the Los Angeles County Fire Department Hazmat Division and the Los Angeles Department of Building and Safety. Arraignment is scheduled for June 11.

- Count 1 - Failure to properly label hazardous waste container.
- Count 2 - Failure to implement a contingency plan.
- Count 3 - Unlawful construction of office trailer.
- Count 4 - Use of land other than was permitted.
- Count 5 - Failure to comply with an order issued by the Department of Building and Safety
- Penalties: Up to six months in jail and/or \$1,000 fine for each count.

Jose G. Villalpando, dba Refections Auto Body, 1211 W. Anaheim Street, was inspected June 12 and July 14, 2003, by the Los Angeles County Fire Department and the Los Angeles Department of Building and Safety, City Watershed Protection Division. Arraignment is scheduled for June 14.

- Count 1 - Discharge of non-stormwater to the storm drain system.
- Count 2 - Failure to properly label hazardous waste container.
- Count 3 - Failure to implement a contingency plan.
- Penalties: Up to 6 months jail and/or \$1,000 fine for each count.

Rigoberto Gutierrez, dba Astro Auto Dismantlers, 1002 N. Schley Avenue, was inspected July 8, 2003, by Los Angeles County Fire Department, California Regional Water Quality Control Board, and the Los Angeles Department of Building and Safety. Arraignment is scheduled for June 11.

- Count 1 - Failure to properly label hazardous waste container.
- Count 2 - Failure to implement a contingency plan.
- Count 3 - Failure to provide classroom instruction or on-the-job training program.
- Count 4 - Failure to maintain records of training.
- Count 5 - Failure to implement best management practices required by the Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan.

-more-

- Count 6 - Obstructing public right of way (sidewalk) with vehicles and vehicle parts and trash.
- Penalties: Counts 1-4 and 6 – Up to 6 months jail and/or \$1,000 fine
Count 5 - Up to one year jail and/or fines between \$5,000 and \$25,000 per day of the violation.

Guadalupe J. Rivas, dba Lupe's Auto Sales & Dismantling, 918 N. Schley Avenue, was inspected June 5, 2003, by Los Angeles County Fire Department, California Regional Water Quality Control Board, and the Los Angeles Department of Building and Safety. Arraignment is scheduled for June 11.

- Count 1 - Failure to implement best management practices required by the Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan.
- Count 2 - Failure to implement a contingency plan.
- Count 3 - Failure to provide for a solid fence or wall within M3 zone.
- Count 4 - Unlawfully stored cars at a height greater than the fence.
- Counts 5 and 6 - Construction and use of a building without a building permit.
- Count 7 - Obstructing public right of way (sidewalk) with vehicles and vehicle parts and trash.
- Penalties: Count 1: Up to one year jail and/or fines between \$5,000 and \$25,000 per day of violation
Counts 2-7: Up to 6 months jail and/or \$1,000 fine for each count.

Allen Alevy, dba CBA Industries in Wilmington was inspected March 3. Arraignment is scheduled for June 11, 2004.

- Count 1 - Use of land other than was permitted without securing a permit.
Alevy improperly uses his vacant lot for truck storage without a permit.
- Count 2 - Failure to comply with order issued by Los Angeles Department of Building and Safety. Alevy continues with truck storage without a permit.
- Penalties: Up to 6 months jail and/or \$1,000 fine for each count.

###